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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JIDDA 05041 141723Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 /026 W
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O 141600Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1869

S E C R E T JIDDA 5041

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USMTM DHAHRAN FOR INFORMATION

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, US
SUBJECT: MILITARY SUPPLY ACTIONS FOR SAUDI ARABIA

REF: (A) STATE 164709; (B) JIDDA 4419

SUMMARY:
MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN PLEASED TO LEARN OF PROPOSED U.S. SUPPLY ACTION FOR EARLY PROVISION OF TOW MISSILES AND 155MM SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZERS. HE WILL LET US KNOW SHORTLY OF SAG'S FORMAL RESPONSE TO OUR OFFER. AMBASSADOR TOLD SULTAN THAT OTHER ITEMS ON SAUDI WANT LIST WERE BEING CAREFULLY STUDIED, BUT NO RESPONSE COULD BE GIVEN BEFORE COMPLETION OF OUR MID-EAST POLICY REVIEW. SULTAN'S ATTITUDE POSITIVE AND UNDERSTANDING. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRINCE SA'UD ARGUED FOR SWIFT U.S. RESPONSE TO ALL OF SAG PENDING ARMS REQUESTS. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MEETING WITH MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN JULY 14, AMBASSADOR AKINS INFORMED HIM THAT AS A RESULT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND THOSE OF CHUSMTM GENERAL AHMANN, THE USG WAS NOW ABLE TO MAKE AN INITIAL AND POSITIVE REPLY TO SOME OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY REQUESTS THAT SULTAN HAD MADE OF THE AMBASSADOR AT THEIR PREVIOUS MEETING (REF B). THE AMBASSADOR THEN GAVE SULTAN THE INFORMATION ON TOW MISSILES AND 155MM SELF-PROPELLED
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HOWITZERS PER REF A.

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2. SULTAN WAS PLEASED AND MOST INTERESTED WITH THE NEWS. HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR SLOWLY TO REPEAT HIMSELF, WHILE HE (SULTAN) TOOK IT DOWN ON PAPER. AFTER CHECKING TO SEE THAT QUANTITIES ALLUDED TO BY THE AMBAS- SADOR CORRESPONDED WITH THE QUANTITIES ON RECORD IN MODA'S FILES, SULTAN SAID HE WOULD TAKE THIS GOOD NEWS TO PRINCE FAHD THAT SAME EVENING. HE WOULD LET US KNOW SHORTLY--PERHAPS EVEN AS SOON AS JULY 15--OF THE SAG'S FORMAL RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S PROPOSAL.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE HOWITZERS, SULTAN BELIEVED THE TRAINING TEAM WOULD BE WELCOME, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO BREAKDOWN IN THE COORDINATION OF SUPPLY, WHEREBY HOWITZERS ON LOAN ARE EVENTUALLY REPLACED BY NEW EQUIPMENT. IT COULD BE VERY BAD FOR HIS OFFICERS' MORALE IF THE OLD EQUIPMENT WERE TAKEN AWAY, AND THE ARMY WERE TO BE WITHOUT THESE WEAPONS FOR AN ENSUING PERIOD. AMBASSADOR AKINS ASSURED HIM THAT HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO SEE THAT THIS DID NOT HAPPEN, AND IN FACT THAT GENERAL AHMANN WOULD BE CONSULTING WITH OFFICIALS IN THE DEPART- MENT OF DEFENSE TO ASSURE THE SMOOTH AND ORDERLY TIMING OF DELIVERIES.

4. SULTAN ASKED IF THE EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE HIM WITH A SUMMARY OF THE AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION FOR THE RECORD; THIS HAS BEEN DONE BY MEANS OF A FIRST PERSON NOTE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO SULTAN'S QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER ITEMS ON THE SAUDI LIST OF REQUIRED ITEMS, THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THEY WERE BEING CAREFULLY STUDIED BUT NO RESPONSE COULD BE GIVEN BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF OUR MIDDLE EAST POLICY REVIEW. SULTAN UNDERSTOOD.

6. PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISEL, SAUDI MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION LATER IN THE DAY WAS INITIALLY LESS RESPONSIVE THAN WAS SULTAN. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT COULD NOT RPT NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THERE SHOULD BE ANY DELAY AT ALL; THE SAUDIS GIVE THE U.S. PREFERENCE IN EVERYTHING; THEY FOLLOW OUR ADVICE
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AND THE MILITARY ITEMS THEY HAVE REQUESTED ARE SIMPLY THOSE WHICH AMERICAN MILITARY OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD THEM THEY NEED. THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS NO DISPOSITION IN WASHINGTON TO SHORT-CHANGE SAUDI ARABIA, BUT ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO SELL LARGE QUANTITIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA NOW WHEN WE HAVE REFUSED TO SELL ARMS TO ISRAEL OR ANY OF THE OTHER CONFRONTATION STATES WOULD COMPLICATE SECRETARY KISSINGER'S

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PEACE EFFORTS GREATLY AND NEEDLESSLY. IF SAUD DID NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT AT LEAST HE DID NOT PRESS HIS OWN POINT.
AKINS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USMTM DHAHRAN

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